

Vector favours NRM cross-grade over standard SWAF up-grade

NRM Down-Under

Vector Limited, the largest New Zealand Gas and Electricity Utility is in the process of standardising their heavily customised Smallworld GIS to NRM. This represents the third NRM Project in the Southern Hemisphere, the other two being ENERCAL in New Caledonia and Mainpower on the South Island of New Zealand.

Large GIS user organisations, such as Electricity, Gas, Water and Telco utilities are faced with a costly core software upgrade cycle every time their GIS software suppliers decide to change or enhance the underlying product data and process models. While European utilities have a history of early industry data model standardisation ("Fachschalen"), the Asia/Pacific region had undertaken little or no effort to achieve similar synergies which would result in significant savings during system upgrade cycles.

Individual customised solutions are complex to design, expensive to implement, lack commercial quality (due to the small user/tester population) and are difficult and expensive to maintain. By comparison, Industry Standard Solutions are turn-key products, can easily be configured, are quality assured based on practical industry experience, are tested by a large user base, have a fixed annual maintenance budget and are built on an open, common and scalable foundation.

The Network Resource Managers (NRM), provide customers with standard data models and applications chosen by 300+ organisations in Europe. More than 10 years of development tailored specifically to the industry's needs has made NRM an International Standard for electricity, gas, water and wastewater – with organisations like the German Association for Gas and Water (DVGW) granting Industry Certification.

The typical business benefits are clear cut: By capturing 80-90% of the industry



common data and process model similarities in a well designed and supported model, the remaining 10-20% of specific customisations is reduced to a minimum. This allows users to focus on system capabilities that provide a competitive advantage or significant cost savings for the organisation. Organisations also benefit from the larger user base of Industry Standard Solutions through continuous refinement and extension of the standard.

The project at Vector is implemented by we-do-IT, Mettenmeier's distributor for Australia and New Zealand. The project is performed in various stages with the gas network migration completed earlier in the year and the electricity network migration nearing completion in August 2006.

Vector consider that by moving to a standardised product suite, maintenance costs will be offset by the decreased level of customisations that are required to be supported.

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